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PEACE, IGNOMINY,

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AND

DESTRUCTION:

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P O E M.

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INSCRIBED TO

THE RT. HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX.

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" Rompez, rompez tout pacte avec l'impiété."

RACINE.  
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1796.



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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

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SIR,

I CANNOT pay the Candour that accompanies your great Talents a higher Compliment, than by dedicating to you a Poem, whose general Principle is adverse to your political Sentiments.

I have the honour to be

Your obedient humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

5 JA 59



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PEACE, IGNOMINY,

AND

DESTRUCTION.

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AROUND th' enduring martyr's hallow'd shrine  
Their brightest flowers the holy Muses twine !  
With roses blushing from the fields of war,  
Their skilful hands adorn the victor's car !  
And, for the candid brow of peace, they bring  
The modest honours of the early spring !  
But for the peace that lifts th' imploring eye,  
From whose frail breast escapes the coward's sigh,  
No muse applauding one small leaf shall bring  
Of all the foliage of the early spring ;  
But, from her bow'r, shall Ignominy rend  
A branch of nightshade for her *gentle* friend !

THESE painful eyes behold an English Peer  
 (His weak Memorial sicklied o'er with fear,)  
 In humble attitude a suppliant stand,  
 To claim the friendship of a murd'rous band!  
 The plaintive breathings of the snow-wing'd dove  
 Ill suit the imperial messenger of Jove—  
 Who should, by long-excited vengeance driv'n,  
 Bear in his grasp the thunderbolt of heav'n;

OH, my lov'd country! time-ennobled realm,  
 Where jealous honour still has watch'd the helm;  
 Th' unclouded glory long to Europe known  
 Which clasps thy loins like a refulgent zone:  
 Say, will thy hand the hallow'd cestus tear,  
 And yield thy virtue to the tainting air?  
 For me—unmark'd by honours, wealth, or fame,  
 No swelling title blazoning round my name!—  
 To be a fleeting bubble of thy earth  
 Inflames my mounting soul with pride of birth!  
 Oh, sacred parent! still thyself revere;  
 To honour's call, to virtue's voice, be near:  
 Blur not the brightness of thy heav'nly cause  
 With one dim moment's intervening pause.

Better

Better to fall in glory's full career,  
 Embracing honour on th' untimely bier;  
 Than weak, subdued, with agonising strife,  
 Waste (in the socket) the last gleams of life.  
 Say, if to cloathe with light the laughing skies  
 The God of Day were doom'd no more to rise,  
 Were it not better, in the pomp of pow'r,  
 In the rich ardour of meridian hour,  
 To rush abrupt from heav'n with downward flight  
 A flaming chaos to the jaws of night;  
 Than tinge the ocean with a ling'ring ray,  
 Expiring in the silence of decay?

YET think not France from nature will depart,  
 And chace the fiend that grapples to her heart;  
 That the wild tigress will forego her prey,  
 Couch with the kid, and with the lambkin play;  
 That the fond child shall stretch his little hand  
 To lead the lion in a flow'r'y band!  
 These beauteous emblems of the days of old  
 With this mock concord no resemblance hold:  
 No heavy drops of mandragora steep  
 The dragon's eyelids in the dews of sleep!

The gift extended by a faithless foe  
 Is the concealment of a lurking woe :  
 'Tis like the pause that Nature's storm bestows,  
 An awful calm—the thunder's dread repose !

My anxious eyes solicit still in vain  
 Some sign that might my failing hopes sustain ;  
 Some sacred altar, rob'd in spotless white,  
 Where candour's priest performs the genial rite ;  
 Where long-tried statesmen, fraught with wisdom's lore,  
 Whose hair the hand of peace hath silver'd o'er,  
 With learned fathers sway'd by virtue's rule,  
 Whom peace hath tutor'd in religion's school ;  
 Where, pensive as they walk'd, the holy breeze  
 Flew through the shady cloister whisp'ring peace.  
 For these best pledges, other scenes arise—  
 Th' enchanter's cauldron smites my wond'ring eyes !  
 Behold a troop of ghastly shapes advance  
 In frantic mood, and form a horrid dance ;  
 Now bending low, these haggard forms of hell  
 Breathe the dark pray'r, and mutter the dread spell :  
 And now into the turbid stream they throw  
 (With imprecations big with future woe)

The



The galling tears that flow'd from beauty's cheek,  
 The voice of agony, and terror's shriek,  
 The blood that trickled from affliction's dart,  
 The sighs exhaling from a broken heart,  
 The burst of anguish, murder's piercing cry,  
 The screams that hurried thro' the midnight sky,  
 The famish'd infant's deep expiring groan,  
 The dungeon'd victim's solitary moan,  
 The clotted hair which desperation tore,  
 The milk of murder'd mothers streak'd with gore,  
 The plaint of innocence, the virgin's pray'r  
 Which the rude ravisher consign'd to air,  
 The hallow'd edicts by religion plann'd,  
 And holy wedlock's defecrated band :  
 Behold the infernal forcerers unite  
 To close their incantation's fearful rite,  
 And leering cast into the vafe profound,  
 The likeness of two skulls which once were crown'd !

SAY, for these fiends, if England can descend  
 To weave the bond that grapples friend to friend,  
 Flown is the spirit of her living fame ;—  
 And what remains ?—a carcase of a name !

COU'D I like DRYDEN wield the bolts of war,  
 Or boast the warm exuberance of PARR ?  
 The glow of mind, the piercing ray of heav'n,  
 By nature's liberal hand to ORFORD giv'n ?  
 The zeal of him whose energetic strain  
 Unfolds the sorrows of the negro train,  
 Brings the heart-rending tale to Britain's ear,  
 And bids compassion pay her long arrear :  
 The arguments that flow from WYNDHAM's sense,  
 Well guarded round by reason's strongest fence ;  
 The sacred boon by CHATHAM's SON possess'd,  
 The muse of eloquence that fires his breast :  
 The quiver richly stored with attic darts,  
 Which genius to his SHERIDAN imparts :  
 Th' exalting winnow'd purity of soul  
 With which FITZWILLIAM soars beyond controul ;  
 Who, greatly daring, with a zeal severe  
 Stemm'd the wild deluge of opprobrious fear ;  
 And, on the day eternally renown'd,  
 Like ABDIEL, was the only faithful found :—  
 Had I these pow'rs concenter'd in one form,  
 I'd pour on England the resistless storm,  
 To wake her soul, to rouse her mental part,  
 And chase her sombrous lethargy of heart.

Do some pretend that justice holds the scales  
 That o'er French councils honour now prevails ?  
 Approach the dial in the dead of night,  
 Demand the hour by artificial light ;  
 Then virtue seek with an inquiring eye,  
 Amid the system unillum'd from high.

\* Mark yon sad cemetery's starless gloom,  
 Where time shall ne'er unlock the rav'nous tomb,  
 Where shadowy death shall a dread vigil keep,  
 'Midst the still horror of eternal sleep.  
 There the pledg'd maiden, at th' approach of eve,  
 O'er the dear relics of the youth shall grieve,  
 While her dark creed shall urge the sting of woe,  
 And bid her flowing tears for ever flow :  
 Hope dares not whisper to her clouded eye  
 To send a glance to time's unfolding sky,  
 Where pity weaves the amaranthine chain  
 To circle lovers ne'er to part again.

THERE, too, the mother, with affliction wild,  
 Bends o'er the grave that holds her darling child,

\* November the 19th, 1793. The Convention decreed  
 that a spot of ground should be allotted for a burial place  
 with this inscription.....“ Death is an eternal Sleep.”

For ever holds—No pleasing vision cries,

“ Suppress the tears that trickle from thine eyes,

“ Ah ! know thy child with angels soars on high

“ In the bright regions of the upper sky,

“ And, deck’d with wings that glitter to the ray,

“ Plays on the sun-beams of eternal day.”—

Her dark’ning creed, with no assuagement fraught,

Forbids her soul to grasp the cheering thought !

THERE, too, the friend his other-self shall mourn,

From his habitual fight for ever torn ;

Forbid to look to that celestial shore

Whose blissful bow’rs shall friend to friend restore

Thus the strong chain their sacrilege has riv’n

Which bound in sacred union earth and heav’n ;

Made ev’ry future high reversion void ;

The rights of immortality destroy’d ;

Compell’d the claims of merit to be mute ;

Creation’s lord degraded to a brute ;

And, what their hell-constructed thought design’d,

Insulted nature, and dethron’d the mind !

BEHOLD



\* BEHOLD where flow'rets deck the length'ning way,  
 The flow procession moves in bright array :  
 A gorgeous spectacle ! ovation's car !  
 Prefs'd by no hero slaughter'd in the war,  
 But prefs'd by him who scatter'd wild alarm,  
 And rais'd 'gainst virtue his destructive arm :  
 Who dar'd on truth's bright shield, in evil hour,  
 The poison'd shafts of blasphemy to show'r.  
 His ardent vot'ries—a licentious crowd—  
 Uplift their champion, fest'ring in his shroud,  
 And, while the grave-worms fasten on his frame,  
 High honours pay to his irrev'rent name !  
 Pale Irreligion comes with all her train—  
 Her atheist choir—to act the rites profane ;  
 She comes with all the witlings of the land,  
 Her grave Buffoons, her academic band !  
 The steps of the fam'd Porch they now ascend,  
 And through the pillar'd Isles their march they bend,  
 An host of praiseful voices rends the Fane  
 And impious echoes multiply the strain.  
 But when the corse was to the vault convey'd,  
 Night round the temple flung her darkest shade ;

\* July the 11th, 1791. VOLTAIRE's ashes were removed  
 to St. Geneviève,

With

With terror heav'd the sympathetic ground  
From every altar breath'd a sigh profound ;  
And fiends rejoic'd, while angels wept around !

TIME was when France preferred her learned name,  
And wore the wreath bestow'd by classic fame :  
Mark the dread change !—the cold immoral blast  
Has chill'd the plants of science as it pass'd,  
Nipt the young thought just bursting from its fold,  
And froze instruction's current as it roll'd,

SEE education weeping on the ground ;  
Her globes, her torch, her emblems scatter'd round ;  
Her children all are fled !—the path, that leads  
To her august abode, is choak'd with weeds :  
She mourns her sabbaths, and her rites suppress'd ;  
She mourns her silent hours' ignoble rest.  
Who now appears the tutorefs of youth,  
To cheer the darken'd mind with beams of truth ?  
(With those clear rays which her bright noon adorn,)  
To streak and beautify her pupil's morn.

FROM

FROM the wide-yawning ground now bursts to view  
 A form gigantic, and of fable hue ;  
 'Tis Inhumanity—she comes to trace  
 Instruction's precepts to the rising race :  
 She feasts their minds—not with theatric show,  
 But with live scenes of dire en-sanguin'd woe !  
 Gluts their affections with atrocious food,  
 With acts of wrath, and festivals of blood !  
 \* Behold her children, new to war's alarms,  
 At her commandment grasp their little arms !  
 Behold yon aged group, whose silver hair  
 Demands compassion and intreats to spare !  
 'Gainst these—whose crimes are poverty and age,  
 She bids her pupils act their virgin rage ;  
 And as they now impel the death-wing'd balls,  
 Some benefactor, or some parent falls !  
 With horror's deep'ning dye so early stain'd,  
 In massacrous employ so early train'd,  
 Will they not terrify the future day  
 Whose rudiments of vice such proofs display ?  
 —'Gainst these to war is Virtue's best crusade :  
 She cries “ Oh, England ! hasten to my aid !

\* A battalion of children, from ten to eleven, were organised at Rennes, who were made to shoot old men of eighty.

“ See

" See atheist cruelty her weapons wield !

" Lift to her blow thy consecrated shield."

OH ! that the warning voice to me was giv'n,  
Which once resounded through the vault of heav'n,  
*Woe to the sons of Earth !*

I would o'erwhelm  
With sudden terror the unconscious realm ;  
Till grasping one great plan by truth design'd  
The will of many gath'ring to one mind,  
With courage added to prophetic fear,  
She should to France an iron aspect wear.

WOE to the land, which (shamefully secure)  
Shrinks from the toil that wisdom bids endure,  
Declines the steps of glory to retrace,  
And shuns calamity to meet disgrace !—  
Misfortune is the night expecting day ;  
Disgrace a stain that seas can't wash away.

A VOICE



\* A VOICE prophetic smote the passive air,  
 And cried to Media—*Haste ! prepare, prepare !*  
*Resume the shields, and make the arrows bright ;*  
*Direct to Babylon their hasty flight :*  
*Oh ! thou, who fill'st the trembling earth with woe,*  
*Destroying mountain ! I'm thy dreadful foe ;*  
*I will put forth my arm, and thou shal't rush,*  
*With flaming ruin, and, descending crush*  
*Deep to th' intombing vale !*

Cou'd England hear,

The sound perchance wou'd vibrate on her ear ;  
 And she referring to that ruinous pow'r,  
 Would catch the lesson of the present hour :  
 Like Media, she would dart a threat'ning eye,  
 Proud to perform the menace from on high,  
 And cry to heav'n as she ascends the car,  
 “ Thou art my battle-axe, my strength of war.”

THEN cease, oh Britain ! time-ennobled land !  
 Cease to implore what virtue can't demand !  
 Yes ! I adjure thee by thy days of yore ;  
 By thine illustrious fame's untainted store :

\* See *Jeremiah*, chapter 51.

By

By all the rev'rence thy great statesmen claim,  
 Who rais'd, on wisdom's plan, thy wond'rous frame ;  
 By all thy sons, who in thy cause have bled ;  
 By all the tears their drooping widows shed !  
 By all thy sacred bards, whose magic lays  
 Sound in thy porch and dignify thy praise ;  
 By thy benevolence—that brilliant gem  
 Whose lustre plays around thy diadem ;  
 By all the charities that most endear ;  
 By Emigrancy's meek imploring tear ;  
 Thou'lt not reject her at her utmost need,  
 Nor plant thy footsteps on the broken reed :—  
 Yes ! I adjure thee by the fainted train,  
 Who heav'n-instructed rear'd thy awful fane ;  
 Who for imperial Rome's gay pomp of lights,  
 Her pageant altars, and her scenic rites,  
 Gave to thy holy lips a purer pray'r  
 Whose chaste ascension breathes celestial air.

OFT' when in vain the art of medicine strives,  
 How nature trusting to herself revives !  
 So—wou'd our busy state-empirics cease  
 To pour the opium of reposing peace—

England

England would start from her ignoble ease,  
 And rise superior to her new disease,  
 And boldly grasp the madd'ning arm of France,  
 \* 'Till, like AGAVE wak'ning from her trance,  
 She trembling casts her haggard eyes around,  
 And views her infant bleeding on the ground.

BUT if cold reason with her length'ning chain  
 Comes ev'ry vigorous purpose to restrain :—  
 Ah! then no time can England's fame restore,  
 The curtain drops, and glory's scene is o'er.  
 —Resign'd, submissive to my humbler Fate,  
 Excluded from the conclave of the state,  
 It cheers me to reflect I'm not decreed  
 To make this bond of peace my act and deed!  
 'Ere I wou'd fix th' irrevocable seal,  
 And legalise what shame can ne'er repeal,  
 † I'd be the wretch whose infidel designs  
 Creep in his mawkish, cold, lethargic lines :  
 Who meanly caters from dim reason's ray,  
 While bright religion pours a flood of day,

\* Alluding to AGAVE, who, in a delirium, slew her child....See Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, book iii.

† See a tedious composition in rhyme, intituled "The Progress of Civil Society."

Who



Who from the gates of wisdom turns aside,  
 And takes Lucretius for his moral guide.  
 I'd rather (by the nine accurst) produce  
 The harsh crab vintage of the Baviad muse,  
 Whose cynic numbers not devoid of art  
 Spring from the workings of a bilious heart,  
 Coarse, unrefin'd, inelegantly keen,  
 The foul o'erflowings of self-tortur'd spleen.

THOU, who hast long attain'd th' immortal goal  
 While choral plaudits sound from pole to pole!  
 The glowing sun-set of whose honour'd day  
 Expands the brilliance of meridian ray:  
 Who hast from states remov'd th' incumbent shade,  
 And the wide sphere of government display'd,  
 The distant azure of whose vague extremes  
 Thou hast illum'd with Truth's unerring beams:  
 Our household deity! who warns, foretells,  
 Points to the den where the hush'd monster dwells,  
 Presents our perils awfully to view,  
 And bids the Country to herself be true.  
 Oh, Sage of *Beaconsfield*! indulge the muse  
 Who the same track (thou hast adorn'd) pursues;  
 Who gleans thy scatt'ring, grasps the falling grain  
 From the full harvest of thy 'larded wine!